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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the results of a three-year series of studies of the development and implementation of statewide pupil proficiency standards in New Jersey, set in response to the passage of Chapter 97, New Jersey Public Laws of 1976. The first section of the report summarizes a survey of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards in states other than New Jersey. The second section reflects on the variability of locally determined pupil proficiency standards in basic skills within the state of New Jersey. The third section reviews the standard setting decision-making process in greater detail through case studies of nine representative districts selected according to socioeconomic characteristics and the level of their local minimum standards. The fourth section summarizes interviews with 40 leading figures who have been involved in passing and in opposing the minimum competency laws. The fifth section describes how minimum pupil proficiency standards were developed in New Jersey. The final section examines the fiscal and programmatic impact of the state compensatory education programs on children found to be below statewide minimum standards in communication and computation skills. Each section contains illustrative tables, and the document concludes with appendices providing the interview protocols and research instruments. (IW)

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ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL AND STATEWIDE STANDARDS IN BASIC SKILLS IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY: A FINAL REPORT

A Study Done Under NIE Grant G-76-0105
Awarded to:

The Rutgers University Graduate School of Education and The New Jersey Education Reform Project of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition

Kenneth Carlson and Lawrence Rubin

September 1979

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Introduction

The NIE Project, grant number NIE G-760105, was designed for an examination of the development and implementation of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards in New Jersey. The project was conducted from the period of October 1, 1976 through September 30, 1979. Co-directors of the project were Kenneth Carlson of the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education and Lawrence Rubin of the New Jersey Education Reform Project. Research assistants at different times during the project were Joyce Lord, Theresa Marshall, Robert Noonan, and Holly Robinson.

There is a judicial and legislative history behind the adoption of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards in New Jersey, and this history can be summarized briefly as follows.[1] On January 19, 1972, litigation was ruled upon in the Superior Court of Hudson County, New Jersey, to have the state school finance system declared unconstitutional on both state and federal grounds. The plaintiff was Kenneth Robinson, a Jersey City student, on behalf of Jersey City and other urban communities. The defendant was William Cahill, Governor of New Jersey.

The gist of the plaintiffs' case was that the state school finance system, by its reliance on local school district property wealth, discriminated against both students and taxpayers in property-poor districts.

The Hudson County Superior Court found for the plaintiffs on the basis of the equal protection clauses of the state and federal constitutions. Defendants appealed to the New Jersey Supreme Court. However, before this court ruled, the U.S. Supreme Court, in March 1973, issued its ruling in the Rodriguez v. San Antonio School District case, saying that school finance systems similar to that in New Jersey did not contravene the federal constitution. The verdict of the New Jersey court was handed down two weeks later, on April 3, 1974.

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[1] For a much fuller description of the judicial history and the opening stages of legislative action, see Richard Lehne, Quest for Justice, New York: Longmans, Inc., 1978.

The New Jersey Supreme Court found for the plaintiffs, but not on the basis of the equal protection clause of either the state or federal constitution. Instead, the court said that the state school finance system denied students in property-poor districts the "thorough and efficient" education which they were guaranteed by an 1872 amendment to the state constitution. The legislature was given a deadline by which to enact a school finance formula that could satisfy the constitutional requirement. The legislature was also directed to spell out the meaning of the constitutional guarantee of a "thorough and efficient" education.

A new finance formula would necessarily entail greater reliance on state tax sources and a lessened dependence on local property wealth. That is, there would have to be a redistribution of revenue from wealthier communities to poorer communities. New Jersey has a suburban-dominated legislature, so there was considerable caution about the extent to which this redistribution should be effected. The legislators could not agree on this redistribution, and the court's deadlines came and went.

Eventually a funding mechanism was passed by the legislature. The court reviewed the measure and, on January 30, 1976, found it to be facially constitutional pending legislation by which to raise the necessary revenue. A new deadline was set, beyond which the court would not permit the public schools of New Jersey to operate. This deadline passed on July 1, 1976, and from then until July 9 the schools of New Jersey were closed by court order. The order was lifted when the legislature adopted a state income tax of 2 per cent on income up to $20,000 and of 2.5 per cent on income above that amount.

The legislature had met the first of the court's directives by enacting a new school finance system and an income tax with which to fund the system.

The second court directive--for a specification of a "thorough and efficient" education--had been referred by the legislature to the State Education Department. At this critical time, the department was between commissioners, and the acting commissioner was incapacitated with heart trouble. The assistant commissioner for curriculum took charge of developing a specification of "thorough and efficient" education. He worked out a process definition consisting of the following processes, to be undertaken in each district: (1) setting of goals,

(2) developing of goal indicators, (3) using goal indicators to assess student needs, (4) designing and implementing an educational program to meet student needs, (5) evaluating the success of the program in terms of student performance, and (5) using the evaluation results to modify and rebudget the educational program.

This process model of "thorough and efficient" education was acceptable to the professional education community, but because this approach permitted each district to establish its own educational expectations and standards, there soon developed a sentiment among the urban, minority and business communities for a pupil achievement model. Their fear was that the process model would merely institutionalize the achievement gaps across school districts which already existed. This sentiment led to the passage of Chapter 97, New Jersey Public Laws of 1976. This law called for the development of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards in communication and computation skills for pupils in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11. In addition, the law requires remediation efforts on behalf of those students who fall below the state standards. For students in grades other than the state-tested grades of 3, 6, 9 and 11, local standards are set subject to state approval. The funding for these programs is covered by a provision in the state aid formula, which includes the failure rate at the state-tested grades extrapolated to all grades, as well as a poverty factor.

It was the development and implementation of Chapter 97 with which this project was concerned. The project was conducted as a series of studies, which are here summarized in the order in which they were undertaken.

Statewide Minimum Pupil Proficiency Standards: A Survey of the States

The number of states which have developed or are developing or considering the development of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards has grown rapidly during this decade. At the time this study was prepared, in March 1977, sixteen states were beginning to implement minimum standards programs, three states were in the process of developing such programs, fourteen states had task forces studying the issue or legislation proposed but not yet passed, while nine other states were in early study stages. Only eight states reported no activity at all. (See Table 1.)

A detailed analysis of the programs of the most advanced sixteen states indicated wide variations in their progress as well as their methodologies and ultimate goals. (See Table 2.) While some states were still developing their assessment instrument, California had started its "early exit" program, and the programs in Georgia, Michigan and Nebraska had been operational for more than one year. Arizona was the only state to have established minimum standards for graduation in that year, with Florida and Georgia planning to follow in 1979, New York and California in 1980, Vermont in 1981, and Idaho and Maryland in 1982.

The programs differ from one another in various ways. A major division is between those states which require statewide minimum standards and those which permit local standards. Half of the sixteen states use local standards in some way.

The programs also differ in terms of purpose. For example, California and Florida were using statewide standards for an early graduation program. Of the twelve states planning to use minimum standards for graduation, or promotion, five had statewide standards and seven permitted local standards. Five states used statewide standards as a means of evaluating district and state educational program effectiveness. Michigan and New Jersey use their state standards to identify children in need of remediation aid as a basis for state and for compensatory education.

TABLE 1

THE STATUS OF STATE ACTIVITY REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY STANDARDS (AS OF MARCH 15, 1977)

NO PLANS	UNDER STUDY	PLANNING[1]	DEVELOPING PROGRAM[2]	PROGRAM BEING IMPLEMENTED
ARKANSAS	ALASKA	ALABAMA	DELAWARE	ARIZONA
INDIANA	HAWAII	CONNECTICUT (L)	MASSACHUSETTS	CALIFORNIA
IOWA	ILLINOIS	KANSAS (L)	PENNSYLVANIA	COLORADO
MONTANA	MAINE	KENTUCKY		FLORIDA
OHIO	MISSISSIPPI	MINNESOTA (L)		GEORGIA
OKLAHOMA	NEW HAMPSHIRE	NEVADA		IDAHO
SOUTH DAKOTA	NEW MEXICO	NORTH CAROLINA (L)		LOUISIANA
WYOMING	RHODE ISLAND	NORTH DAKOTA (L)		MARYLAND
	WEST VIRGINIA	SOUTH CAROLINA		MICHIGAN
		TENNESSEE (L)		MISSOURI
		TEXAS		NEBRASKA
		UTAH		NEW JERSEY
		WASHINGTON (L)		NEW YORK
		WISCONSIN		OREGON
				VERMONT
TOTALS:				VIRGINIA
8	9	14	3	16

[1]The States in this category have either a Task Force studying the desirability of minimum competencies or have had legislation proposed but not passed in this area in the last two years. States with proposed legislation are followed by an (L).

[2]These States have a tentative Minimum Competency Program that is being further defined.

NOTE: Developments in this area have been so rapid that the level of activity of States in the first three columns is subject to constant change.

TABLE 2

A SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF STATE PROGRAMS WHICH REQUIRE THE USE OF MINIMUM STANDARDS (AS OF MARCH 15, 1977)

STATE PROGRAMS	STAND-ARDS		LEVELS ASSESSED	SKILL AREAS					CERTI-FICATION			EVALUA-TION		ACTION		
	STATE	LOCAL		READING	MATH	COMMUNI-CATIONS	LIFE SKILLS	OTHER	GRADUATION	PROMOTION	EARLY EXIT	SCHOOL/ DISTRICT	STUDENT NEEDS	REMEDIATION	PROGRAM MODIFI-CATION	STATE AID, ADJUSTMENTS
AZ[1]		X	8 & 12	X	X	X			X	X			X	X		
CA[2] EARLY EXIT	X		16-17 yr. olds	X	X	X		X			X					
CA[2] GRADUATION		X	7-9; 10-11	X	X	X		0	X				X	X		
CO[3]		0	9-12						0					X		
FL[4] GENERAL	X	X	3, 5, 8, & 11	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	
FL[5] EARLY EXIT	X		- - - - - - - -					X			X					
GA[6] GENERAL	X		4, 8, & 11	X	X	X						X			X	
GA[6] PROMOTION	X		4	X						T			X	X		
GA[7] GRADUATION		T	9-12	T	T	T	T	T	T							
ID[8]	0		9-12	X	X	X			0					X		
LA[9]	X		4, 8, & 11	X	X	X						X			X	
MD[10] GENERAL	X		3, 7, & 11	X						X		X	X	X	X	
GRADUATION	T		- - - - - - - -	T	T	T	T		T							

TABLE 2 (Continued)

STATE PROGRAMS	STANDARDS		LEVELS ASSESSED	SKILL AREAS					CERTIFICATION			EVALUATION			ACTION		
	STATE	LOCAL		READING	MATH	COMMUNICATIONS	LIFE SKILLS	OTHER	GRADUATION	PROMOTION	EARLY EXIT	SCHOOL/DISTRICT	STUDENT NEEDS	REMEDIATION	PROGRAM MODIFICATION	STATE AID, ADJUSTMENTS
MI[11]	X		4, 7, & 10	X	X							X	X	X	X	X
MO	X		8-12	X	X	X		X	T							
NE[12]	0	0	5 to mastery	X	X	X		X					X	X		
NJ	X		4, 7, & 10	X	X							X	X	X	X	X
NY	X		9-12	X	X	X		X	X				X	X		
OR		X	Loc. option	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			
VT		X	Continuous	X	X	X		X	X				X	X		
VA		X	(-12	X	X	X		X	X							

KEY TO SYMBOLS: X = Requirement clearly defined by policy or law.

0 = Local option as defined by state policy or law.

T = Requirement that has been tentatively approved by has not been finalized by law or policy statement.

Most state programs tend to focus on the high school grades because of the widespread emphasis on graduation requirements. All but one of the twelve states with graduation requirements provide for testing prior to 12th grade, some as early as 9th grade.

Four states were developing promotion standards, Arizona from 8th grade, Georgia from 4th grade, Maryland from grades two to eight and Florida in all grades, but with particular emphasis on grades three, five, eight and eleven.

All the states set standards in the basic skill areas of mathematics and reading. Most went beyond reading to "communications" which includes writing, speaking, listening and general language arts skills. Some states call for standards in reasoning and spelling and such content areas as American history, economics or government. Oregon has tried to go beyond the traditional academic emphasis, and includes broader life skill competencies that are required to succeed as adults.

Each state which requires statewide standards had developed or was developing a standardized criterion referenced test instrument, which varied in terms of both the nature of the items included and the passing criteria. Some tests included items which were oriented towards real life situations, while others were more traditional. Passing scores for graduation or promotion had been established on the basis of earlier grade level norms on a stated number or percentage of correct answers.

Where local standards are employed, the state determines the general areas of competency to be assessed, but permits local discretion regarding specific competencies as well as test instruments and standards. For example, California required districts to establish standards in reading comprehension, writing and computation and permitted standards in other areas. Although assessment procedures and standards in all subject areas are to be locally determined, the state will assist districts by providing a bank of test items and examples of minimum standards.

At the time this study was completed certain trends had clearly developed, but many problems had yet to be faced. Most programs focused on the basic skills of communication and computation, largely in the upper grades. Some state programs used minimum standards for promotion and graduate requirements, while others limited

their use to district and state evaluation of educational program effectiveness. Some used statewide standards, other local. Many required remediation services for low achieving students and some used the number of children below state standards as a basis for state aid for compensatory education.

Because even the most advanced programs had barely begun, many questions had not yet arisen. If local standards were permitted, would this lead to a wide diversity of standards aid unequal treatment among districts with respect to promotion, graduation and the provision of remediation services? If statewide standards were required, who set the standards and how? What is the impact of the amount of available state resources on decisions regarding the level of the state's standards and actions to be taken towards those students who fall below the standards? What happens to the assessment instruments, standards and state aid programs when large proportions of potential graduates in some districts do not pass statewide standards and can't get their diplomas? Conversely, what happens if local standards are reduced to allow low achieving students to get diplomas, and the value of that district's diploma is diminished in the public eye as a result? Finally, what impact does all of this have on raising the achievement level of the children who were the presumed beneficiaries of the minimum standards movement? Many of these questions have already been addressed in New Jersey and will be explored in detail in subsequent sections of this study.

Variability in Locally Determined Pupil Proficiency Standards in Basic Skills in the State of New Jersey

Chapter 212, in the original form accepted by the New Jersey Supreme Court, did not require the establishment of statewide pupil proficiency standards. However, the act did require the State Board of Education to establish goals and standards applicable to all public schools (Art. II - Sec. 6), and local districts were required to establish goals, objectives and standards which adhered to the rules of the State Board (Art I - Sec. 7). The term "standard" was defined in Chapter 212 as "the process and stated levels of proficiency used in determining the extent to which goals and objectives are being met."

When the State Board sought to develop an Administrative Code to amplify the new legislation, a debate broke out among the board members regarding the actual meaning of the term "standards." Some preferred the establishment of statewide performance standards which would be used to identify low achieving students and require districts to provide remedial assistance to the identified students. Others wanted statewide performance standards as a means of evaluating local district performance. Still other board members objected to any use of statewide performance standards, and urged that performance standards be locally determined, arguing that the ultimate result of statewide standards would be state determination of curriculum content, and that teachers would teach to the state test, thus narrowing the scope and diminishing the quality of education, and causing state minimums to be local maximums. They also warned that the state's educational budget would rise as testing and remediation costs skyrocketed. Those who favored statewide standards predicted that if local standards were permitted, children with identical educational deficiencies in basic skills would receive supplementary assistance in some districts, but not in others, not for sound educational reasons, but because of fiscal considerations, thus violating the notion of equal educational opportunity. They feared that districts with low property wealth, high tax rates, low expenditure levels, and large proportions of low achieving children would be more likely to set low standards in order to avoid additional expenditures for remedial programs, and criticism from angry parents.

The result of the debate was to require local standards but to have a Task Force examine the desirability and feasibility of statewide standards. The Administrative Code which resulted on November 20, 1975 read as follows:

> 6:8-3.8(a) The district board of education . . . shall establish reasonable minimum proficiency levels in the basic communication and computational skills . . . (c) Preventive and remedial programs . . . shall be established . . . to assist those pupils . . . performing below the established minimum levels of pupil proficiency. . . .

Shortly thereafter, in May of 1976, the legislature amended Chapter 212 to require "statewide standards of pupil proficiency in basic communications and computational skills" (18A:7A.6). However, in the summer of 1976, before the State Board revised the Administrative Code to conform to the new legislation, the code still required districts to create their own minimum standards as a basis for identifying those children requiring assistance.

As a result, it became possible to examine the locally developed standards in order to provide an empirical basis for evaluating the concerns of those who demanded statewide standards. Is there a wide range of proficiency levels selected by local districts for determining where remedial action is warranted? What effect do various socio-economic, educational, and fiscal variables have upon district decisions?

Based upon a study which included 93.1% of the state's districts, and 97.8% of the state's enrollment, the following findings were made:

1. District standards varied substantially. (See Table 3.) The range of standards varied from 3.4 to 5.9, depending on subject and grade level. For example, standards for communication in grade four had a mean of 3.57, a standard deviation of 0.54 and a range from 1.5 to 4.9. As a result, in some districts, children scoring below grade level 1.5 would receive remedial assistance, while in other districts children below grade level 4.9 could enter remedial programs. The widest range was in seventh grade, in both subjects, from 2.0 to 7.9.

2. Socio-economic, educational and fiscal variables showed only moderate association with local standards. (See Table 4.) Six variables were correlated with six standards, covering three grades and two subjects. A

TABLE 3

LOCAL DISTRICT MINIMUM STANDARDS BY SUBJECT
AND GRADE LEVEL - ALL DISTRICTS COMBINED

	N(a)	N(b)	MEAN	STAN. DEV.	ACTUAL MIN.	ACTUAL MAX.	ACTUAL RANGE
COMMUNICATION							
4	489	367	3.57	0.54	1.5	4.9	3.4
7	439	325	6.24	0.86	2.0	7.9	5.9
10	250	118	8.53	1.24	5.0	10.1	5.1
COMPUTATION							
4	481	344	3.58	0.53	1.5	5.0	3.5
7	429	304	6.24	0.82	2.0	7.9	5.9
10	244	94	8.66	1.23	5.4	10.1	4.7

(a) Number of districts assessing children in the designated grade.

(b) Number of districts expressing minimum standard as a grade level rather than as a percentile, or other.

TABLE 4

CORRELATIONS OF LOCALLY DETERMINED MINIMUM STANDARDS WITH SIX INDEPENDENT VARIABLES - ALL DISTRICTS COMBINED[1]

	COMMUNICATION			COMPUTATION		
VARIABLES	4th GRADE	7th GRADE	10th GRADE	4th GRADE	7th GRADE	10th GRADE
DFG	.01	.10	.20*	.02	.03	.15
SCHOOL TAX	-.06	-.07	.03	-.05	-.09	.09
NON-SCHOOL TAX	-.02	-.09	-.16	-.05	-.10	-.13
WEALTH/PUPIL	.08	.11	.22*	.06	.13*	.23*
EXPEND./PUPIL	.02	.09	.15	.04	.13*	.30**
% BELOW STATE STANDARD	-.09	-.09	-.22**	-.25**	-.05	-.18

[1] For districts using the Iowa Test, there was only one significant correlation of -.21 between % Below State Standard and the seventh grade reading minimum.

*p .05
**p .01

variable representing the district's socio-economic status was significantly correlated with only one out of the six standards. School tax rates and non-school tax rates were not significantly correlated with any standard. The district's per pupil property wealth correlated with three standards, while per pupil expenditures correlated with only two standards. The percentage of each district's students who fell below the standards later developed by the state correlated with three of the six standards. None of the significant correlations is greater than .30, and consequently none explains even 10 per cent of the variance.

What is seen in this study is that when New Jersey's districts were given the opportunity to develop their own local standards to be used as a basis for identifying low achieving children who would then be provided remedial assistance, those standards varied quite widely from district to district. This behavior has no educational justification, because children with essentially similar educational needs would be identified for remedial assistance on the basis of widely disparate standards. It would seem to be a clear violation of the mandate of the New Jersey Supreme Court regarding equal educational opportunity.

However, contrary to the fears of those who argued for statewide standards, the local standards were not significantly associated with the socio-economic characteristics of districts or the level of their tax rates, although there was a moderate association with the level of wealth per pupil and expenditures per pupil and the proportion of low achieving students.

These results suggest that there is little relationship between the educational and income levels of a community and the standards set by its school board; that districts with high tax rates are no less willing than other districts to set higher standards which might lead to still higher tax rates. This is consistent with the moderate, positive correlation between expenditures and standards, suggesting that high spending districts are more willing to increase their expenditures than low spending districts. However, contrary to the principles behind the Serrano decision, the results show that local standards <u>are</u> somewhat wealth related, and that, therefore, opportunities for supplemental programs for low achieving children would vary somewhat in accordance with local wealth.

The strongest positive correlation was with the proportion below statewide standards, suggesting that districts with large concentrations of low achieving children tend to set lower criteria for selecting children to receive remedial assistance. As a result, a low achieving child is more likely to receive remedial assistance in a district with a relatively low proportion of low achieving children.

If the six variables had such a limited effect on the local standards, what did? Informal discussions with state officials and district superintendents, and an examination of Department of Education instructions to districts, led to the conclusion that some administrators believed that the minimum standard they selected would affect future state compensatory education (SCE) aid. They believed that future aid would be based not on poverty criteria, but on the number of children below local standards. As events unfolded, they turned out to be right. The aid formula for 1977/78 was based on an enrollment count of children below the district standard. Therefore districts with higher standards had larger SCE enrollments and received more aid. As a result, many suburban districts enjoyed large increases in SCE aid, while many urban districts received much less than what they had previously received, even though their students achieved at lower levels than the suburban students.

Those who set the lower standards did so for a variety of reasons. Some were simply honest and did what they believed to be educationally sound. Others were naive or uninformed about future state plans. Still others simply did not have the local resources to serve the greater number of children identified by higher standards, and were unwilling or unaware of the advantage of enrolling children in non-existent or minimal programs in order to maximize future state aid.

The actual standards set were developed in a variety of ways. Some districts simply divided their SCE aid for 1976/77 by some dollar amount (generally about $300, the Title I concentration requirement) to arrive at the number of students to be served, and then calculated the grade level cutoff below which the selected number would fall. Other districts decided to service a certain percentage of their students, for example the lowest scoring 10%, and selected a standard to achieve that purpose. Other districts used a specified number of grade levels below national norms. The state's failure to set minimum per pupil compensatory expenditure levels and district

determination to maximize future state aid led some districts to set standards as high as the average national norms.

Because some districts believed that the standards they set would determine their future state aid, the potential impact of the various socio-economic and fiscal variables was mitigated to some extent, and it is not possible to predict what their effect might have been had the state announced its future plans clearly, or set minimum per pupil expenditure levels for SCE programs. Nevertheless, as a result of all the various inputs to the decision making process, there were large variances in the level of local standards. In contrast to the humanistic education arguments offered by some proponents of local standards, these variances were not the result of efforts to meet the individual needs of children. In fact they were largely determined by non-educational factors, and children with wide variances in educational achievement were placed in compensatory education programs. At the same time, the predicted reasons for the wide variances which were offered by proponents of statewide standards had only a moderate impact on local standards.

The next section of this study will examine the standard setting decision making process in greater detail through case studies of nine representative districts selected according to socio-economic characteristics and the level of their local minimum standard.

The Development of District Minimum Standards and Implementation Plans in New Jersey: A Study of Decision-Making on the Local Level

As the preceding section of this report narrates, there was a brief period after the adoption of the new education law but before the amendment requiring statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards. During this period, local school districts were required to develop their own minimum standards in math and reading for grades 4, 7 and 10. This study was conducted of the process by which selected districts set their local standards.

Nine districts were selected to represent a range of socioeconomic levels. "Socioeconomic" was defined by a method used by the State Education Department (1975), called district factor grouping. This takes into account the following weighted variables for each district: educational attainment of adults, occupation prestige, mobility, density, urbanization, family income, unemployment, and poverty. Using these variables, a factor score is generated for each school district. The districts are then ranked according to their factor score. Cut-points divide the districts into ten District Factor Groups (DFGs), with approximately equal numbers of districts in all the groups. The ten DFGs are labeled A to J, with A representing the lowest socioeconomic districts and J the highest. Three districts were selected from each of DFGs A, E, and J.

The three districts from each DFG were further selected on the basis of their students' standardized test scores in math and reading in grades 4, 7 and 10. For purposes of comparability, a single standardized test had to be used. This was the Iowa test because it was the most commonly used standardized test in New Jersey. For each of the three DFGs (A, E and J), the district with the highest Iowa scores, the district with the lowest scores, and the district that was closest to the average score for its DFG were selected.

This selection process failed to produce an urban district since the urban districts in New Jersey did not use the Iowa tests. To insure the inclusion of an urban district in the sample, an exception to the Iowa test criterion was made, and an urban district was selected on the basis of its Metropolitan Readiness Test scores. This district was also the only district in the sample with a majority black pupil population - 70.3 percent as compared with only 1.6 percent in the next most black populated district in the sample.

Achievement data and demographic data for the nine districts are given in Tables 5 and 6.

The major source of data for determining the process by which each of the nine districts arrived at its local minimum standards was interviews conducted with district officials. The officials were selected initially on the basis of those who were the official signatories on the minimum standards forms submitted to the State Education Department. When the interviews with these people revealed the involvement of other decision-makers in the standard-setting process, the other decision-makers were also interviewed. The interviewees were asked, among other things, to rank order the decision-makers by their influence on the process.

Other sources of data were the officially submitted state forms as well as documents internal to each district, e.g., school board minutes. It turned out that there was a dearth of internal documents on the standard setting process.

An attempt was made to analyze the data using the process model developed by Agger, Goldrich and Swanson (1964). This model consists of the following stages: (1) policy formulation, (2) policy deliberation, (3) organization of political support, (4) authoritative consideration, (5) promulgation of the decisional outcome, and (6) policy effectuation.

It should be noted at this point that the context in which the local district standard setting occurred in the summer of 1976 was not conducive to a full realization of the stages in the Agger model. The consequences of the standard-setting were not clear. On the one hand, funds for compensatory education had already been allocated to districts, so the standard-setting did not appear to have any immediate financial

TABLE 5

DISTRICT MINIMUM STANDARDS

	Nine Districts	Community Type	School System	Grade Level	Standard Set
D	Highest grade			4M = 4.1	4R = 4.1
F	level minimum	Suburban	K-8	7M = 7.1	7R = 7.1
G	Average grade			4M = 3.7	4R = 3.7
	level minimum	Suburban	K-8	7M = 6.7	7R = 6.7
J	Lowest grade			4M = 3.1	4R = 3.1
	level minimum	Suburban	K-8	7M = 6.1	7R = 6.1
				4M = 4.0	4R = 4.0
D	Highest	Urban-Suburban	K-8	7M = 7.0	7R = 7.0
F				4M = 3.5	4R = 3.5
G	Average	Rural	K-8	7M = 6.5	7R = 6.5
				4M = 2.4	4R = 2.0
E	Lowest	Rural center	K-12	7M = 4.6	7R = 4.1
				4M = 4.5	4R = 4.5
D	Highest	Rural	K-8	7M = 7.5	7R = 7.5
F				4M = 3.7	4R = 3.7
G	Average	Urban-Suburban	K-8	7M = 6.7	7R = 6.7
				4M = 2.9	4R = 2.6
A	Lowest	Urban center	K-12	7M = 5.3	7R = 5.3

KEY: M = Mathematics
R = Reading
4 = fourth grade
7 = seventh grade

TABLE 6

DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

District	Enrollment 10/1/77	Wealth 10/1/77	Income (Family)	% Minority B	% Minority H	Density	Average Teacher Salary 1976 - 77	Pupil Staff Ratio
DFG-J High	2,208	109,087	18,491	.3	.1	2,463	15,926	66.4
DFG-J Average	869	117,248	18,686	.6	.3	1,431	15,606	67.6
DFG-J Low	780	163,838	19,276	.4	.1	1,826	16,357	77.9
DFG-E High	690	70,310	10,804	.2	.5	1,947	13,086	64.5
DFG-E Average	907	70,120	11,023	.3	-	147	11,800	53.3
DFG-E Low	1,327	66,349	9,855	1.6	.3	2,279	15,089	74.0
DFG-A High	685	71,110	8.782	.4	-	43	12,836	45.9
DFG-A Average	481	40,384	9,841	1.4	4.5	14,227	13,521	65.3
DFG-A Low	16,660	30,623	8,725	70.3	11.9	14,243	13,626	59.7

NOTE: Pupil staff ratio = professional staff member per 1,000 pupils.

consequences. Indeed, to some local district officials, the standard-setting was viewed as a paper process to placate the bureaucrats in the State Education Department. On the other hand, there was some prospect that compensatory education funding in future years might be tied into the local standards and the number of below standard pupils that were generated by these standards. Local officials who seriously entertained this prospect, and who might have been tempted to establish high minimum standards by which to procure additional state aid, had also to consider the local political impact of high standards. The community could be pleased that its schools were aiming high, or the community might be displeased to learn that many of its students are "below standard," however high the standard is.

Finally, there was the pressure of time. Only a matter of weeks was allowed by the state for completion and return of its forms. This precluded districts from embarking on lengthy decision-making stages even if they wanted to.

This cross-pressure and unpredictability caused different districts to approach the standard-setting process with different levels of diligence. To some districts it was a perfunctory matter, with no carrots or sticks looming overhead. Other districts at least acted as though there might be something at stake, and they proceeded much more deliberately and with wider input into the decision.

There were several general conclusions drawn from the interview results on the nine districts. District size appeared to affect the breadth of decision-making involvement. Teachers were included in the process in six of the nine districts. Two of the districts in which they were not included were the two largest districts in the sample, including the large urban district.

The most important individual in the standard-setting process was the district superintendent. In eight of the nine districts the superintendent was one of the three major participants in establishing the minimum standards. The second most important individual was the remedial teacher. In smaller districts this person was also the Title I Coordinator or the coordinator of the district's "thorough and efficient" program. Thus, the inclusion of the teaching

staff in the process was often restricted to a single member of the staff who served in a quasi-administrative capacity.

In no district was there reported any influence from non-district sources. It was thought by the researchers that districts might utilize advice from state organizations or professional groups. Such advice may not have been available, but it was not sought in any case. Local standards were strictly an in-house decision.

The districts expressed concern that minimum standards would have the effect of narrowing the curriculum and compelling teachers to teach to the test. There was also concern for the damage that could accrue to students who were labeled below standard. These concerns were more pronounced in DFG-A, the poorest districts, than in the other two DFGs.

Respondents in seven of the districts were confident that their district standards would be higher than the emerging state standards, which they foresaw as reflecting the worst conditions in the state.

The large urban district - the kind of district toward whom the education reform law had been most expressly targeted - was the most apathetic, even negative, toward the idea of minimum standards. It was not felt that such standards would lead to improvement in pupil performance. This district volunteered that it was not using its State compensatory aid to add new programs but merely to continue ones that had previously been funded from local revenue.

There was also a good deal of miscommunication between the State Education Department and the local districts. Local officials assumed that they were bound by requirements which did not, in fact, exist. For example, it was thought that the State's administrative code required that a student who was classified as below standard be pulled out of the regular classroom for remediation. There is no such requirement.

In terms of the standards that the districts actually set, there was no relationship between these standards and the socioeconomic levels of the districts (a finding more extensively documented in the preceding study). The district with the highest minimum

standard in DFG-J, the wealthiest factor group, has a lower standard than that set in one of the DFG-A districts.

Table 7 indicates the lack of relationship between DFG and remediation effort. It also reveals that in two of the poorest districts, where students do not test well, no students were identified for remediation in math. Officials in the large urban district defended this with the argument that they had no remedial math teachers and could not afford to hire any. This district reported 4,393 students below the local minimum standards in math, about whom it proposed to do nothing.

The results of this study indicate again the need for statewide standards. Moreover, the apathy and inaction of the large urban district demonstrate how imperative it is that there be State monitoring of the remediation efforts that are funded by the State, to insure not only that the money is being well used for remediation but that it is being used for remediation at all.

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SELECTED FOR PARTICIPATION
IN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

Districts	Total Student Population	Number Selected	% Below District Minimum
DFG-J High	2,330	R = 6 M = 16	R = .3% M = .7%
DFG-J Average	869	R = 13 M = 9	R = 1.5% M = 1.0%
DFG-J Low	846	R = 0 M = 22	R = 0 M = 2.6%
DFG-E High	509	R = 26 M = 0	R = 5.1% M = 0
DFG-E Average	111	R = 6 M = 20	R = 5.4% M = 18.0%
DFG-E Low	1,499	R = 114 M = 19	R = 7.6% M = 1.3%
DFG-A High	520	R = 94 M = 49	R = 18.1% M = 9.4%
DFG-A Average	328	R = 31 M = 0	R = 9.5% M = 0%
DFG-A Low	17,303	R = 6,144 M = 0	R = 35.5% M = 0%

R = Reading

M = Mathematics

Statewide Minimum Pupil Proficiency Standards in New Jersey: Interviews with Leading Figures

One of the NIE Project studies consisted of interviews with leading figures who had been instrumental in the passage of the minimum competency law and interviews with leaders of the opposition. The interviews were undertaken for the purpose of learning what the sources of support and opposition were to the minimum standards law as well as the justifications which were given for these positions.

Forty people were interviewed during the spring, summer and fall of 1977. The interviewees were selected on the basis of their active involvement in the statewide minimum standards issue. Some names were added to the original list of interviewees as we progressed, and other names were omitted when it became obvious that the organizations which they represented had already had several spokespersons interviewed whose answers did not deivate from each other in any significant respect. The interviewees were from the following organizations: the New Jersey Legislature; the New Jersey State Board of Education; the New Jersey State Department of Education; the New Jersey State Department of Higher Education; the Cherry Hill Public Schools; the Jersey City Public Schools; the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education; Passaic County College; the New Jersey Education Association; the New Jersey Association of School Administrators; the New Jersey School Boards Association; the Education Law Center in Newark; the New Jersey Education Reform Project of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition; the New Jersey Taxpayers Association; the New Jersey Business and Industry Association; the Puerto Rican Congress; the Newark Star Ledger; and the Upward Bound directors in New Jersey.

The interview protocols are contained in the Appendix. These were prepared by the NIE Project staff and submitted to the following people for review and recommendation: Robert Feldmesser of Educational Testing Service; Wayne Hoy of Rutgers University Graduate School of Education; Dale Mann of Columbia University Teachers College. After incorporating the recommendations of the reviewers, we produced the interview

protocols in final form. The protocols indicate that the respondents were guaranteed confidentiality, and responses will not be identified by individuals in this report.

The duration of the interviews was from a half hour to two hours, depending on the interviewee's available time and the intensity of his or her feelings toward the issue of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards. None of the interviews was tape recorded; however, whenever possible an interview was conducted by at least two interviewers. This was the case for twenty-four of the forty interviews, with the remaining sixteen interviews conducted by a single person. The author of this report was present at thirty-three of the interviews. Whenever time permitted, a set of the interview protocols was mailed to the interviewee in advance of the interview. This occurred in most instances.

Among the major findings of the interview study was the organizational breakdown of support/opposition to the legislation. The support was from lay organizations representing special interest groups, including the New Jersey Education Reform Project of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition, the Puerto Rican Congress, the Education Law Center in Newark, the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, the New Jersey School Boards Association, and the Upward Bound directors in New Jersey. Leaders of the New Jersey Taxpayers Association also supported the concept of statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards, although no organizational position was adopted and no lobbying was conducted.

The organized opposition to statewide minimum standards was exclusively from the professional education community. This included the Commissioner and the top staff of the State Education Department, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Federation of Teachers, and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators. A majority of the State Board of Education was opposed to the legislation in its original form, but did acquiesce in the revision which permitted locally determined interim goals en route to the state minimum.

The reasons which the supporters gave for their endorsement of statewide minimum standards were the following. The conservative supporters were concerned primarily with greater accountability and performance

from the schools. They wanted the public to get a fair return on the money it invests in the schools. Moreover, they wanted future generations who will be well enough educated to be economically productive.

The Upward Bound directors were especially sensitive to the fact that kids were getting inflated grades in high school, only to later be crushed in college. The urban and minority groups who supported statewide minimum standards hoped that such standards would spotlight the problems of city schools and generate more state aid for the schools. The concern was not so much for a return on the dollar or the development of economic producers as for equalizing the opportunities of poor kids with those of more fortunate kids. Thus, the urban and minority groups saw statewide minimum standards as a necessary first step in the development of programs which would remediate the deficiencies of low achieving children. They wanted to compel urban teachers and administrators to raise their expectancy levels to a statewide minimum and to explain why children are not reaching that minimum.

A group which lobbied forcefully for adoption of statewide minimum standards and which does not fall on either the conservative or the urban/minority end of the political spectrum is the New Jersey School Boards Association. The headquarters staff of this group formulated a position in support of statewide minimum standards which they were later able to persuade the membership to endorse. The headquarters staff were themselves influenced by the Urban School Boards Committee of the NJSBA. The reasons given for their support of statewide minimum standards echoed the urban/minority position much more than the conservative position. Because it is representative of local school boards, the New Jersey School Boards Association was expected to be the organization which most voiced the local control argument against state standards. When this did not happen, the local control forces lost their most logical advocate. The School Boards Association made it clear, however, that their support for statewide minimum standards was contingent upon an increase in state aid to local districts to allow districts with low property tax wealth the revenue with which to meet the state standards.

The opposition of the education establishment to statewide minimum standards derived from several concerns. There was a concern for preserving local control and

on-the-scene expertise from bureaucratic entanglements and remote decision-makers. As two of the respondents put it independently of each other, state control means statewide mistakes whereas local control also localizes disaster.

There was a concern among the opponents that schools not be leveled down to a statewide minimum. Lighthouse districts should not be denied the resources to maintain their inspirational function, nor should gifted pupils be sacrificed on behalf of weak pupils.

There was a concern that a statewide minimum would result in invidious comparisons among school districts. The comparisons could redound to the detriment rather than the benefit of urban districts if the legislature chose to punish districts for poor performance. Furthermore, children who do poorly on the state tests will be stigmatized, and the urban and minority groups who do poorly will suffer stigmatization beyond that which they already endure. One opponent of state standards expressed the belief that urban and minority kids were being victimized by the Carnegie and Ford Foundations, which supported the basic skills movement as a way of meeting the society's manpower needs. The result is that the poor are forced to pay "cognitive dues" to get the decent treatment to which they are already entitled as human beings, and when they fail to pay these dues through adequate test performance they are humiliated and cast off.

There was a very strong concern that teachers would become the scapegoats for failures more properly attributed to society at large. One of the officials of the New Jersey Education Association told the interviewers of the route he takes through Trenton on his way to work. He passes through decaying streets where the pathology of poverty is all about. There are winos, prostitutes, the idle unemployed, menacing adolescents. He wondered how a child growing up in this area could ever do well in school and whether the conditions in which the child lives were created by teachers.

Finally, the concern was expressed that the decision regarding statewide minimum standards should not have been made by the legislature because this violated the historic autonomy which the State Board of Education has enjoyed from the legislature. To have

legislative management of education entails a reductionism of issues to terms the legislature can understand. It also means that decisions will be made in the cockpit of public controversy, hardly the most deliberative forum.

Naturally, the supporters and opponents of statewide minimum standards each presented their motives as noble. Each side also imputed to the other motives of a baser sort. The conservative supporters of statewide minimum standards were accused of an attempt to embarrass and discredit their urban allies. The conservatives really wanted to show that urban school districts are in too sorry a condition to justify further state expenditures on those districts. (While no conservative supporters of state standards said these things during the formal interviews, one had made these kinds of remarks off the record to the researcher about a year earlier.) The conservatives were trying to build a case for tax reduction. They did not wish to help academically weak urban pupils but wanted to put them in a position where they would drop out of school.

As for the urban/minority members of this strange alliance, it was claimed that they were trying to get more money with which to line their own pockets and cover up the financial mismanagement of the cities. The contention was that the urban schools have not lacked the money with which to do the job, but that they have not spent the money wisely and have kept too many nonproductive people on the payroll.

As for the opponents of statewide minimum standards, they were alleged to be practicing the protectionism of the professional class. The opponents, it was said, wished only to be accountable to themselves. Furthermore, teachers did not want to take responsibility for the performance of their pupils. The opponents were also said to oppose a redistribution of public school monies from the suburban districts, in which most of them were comfortably nested both as residents and public employees, to the urban districts where the most serious problems are. The State Education Department was accused of trying to duck its constitutional responsibility for the state's education system, and the Commissioner was chided for his fear of antagonizing the politically powerful New Jersey Education Association, a group which was widely credited as having deposed the previous Commissioner.

Both the supporters and opponents of statewide minimum standards attributed the adoption of the law to broad national trends. There were the hard facts of declining SAT and literacy scores, coupled with recession-pinched taxpayers. The taxpayers wanted more for their money or at least as much as they thought they used to get. In New Jersey, the state increased its share of education costs from 29% to 40% under the new education law. This naturally caused the State Legislature to be more concerned with the effectiveness of the schools.

The skill demands of the economy were increasing at a time when literacy appeared to be decreasing. Thus the economy required more of the schools at the same time that it appeared to be getting less in the basic skill areas. The blame was laid to the permissiveness which schools were thought to have fallen into in the Sixties and the "frills" which schools adopted to accommodate various student interests. Elective courses were created to such an extent that students were able to use these courses to by-pass basic skill courses. A reaction against this looseness had set in, and a return to basic education was a popular demand at this time. Of course, there are many other causes which have been suggested for the apparent decline in basic skills mastery among schoolchildren, such as television, working mothers, and an increasing divorce rate. However, these nonschool factors were not nearly as amenable to social engineering as were the school factors.

There were also the ambivalent attitudes which people held toward the government. On the one hand, they distrusted the government and demanded accountability mechanisms such as statewide minimum standards. On the other hand, they had a faith that government promulgation meant government performance. This second attitude was alluded to in the remarks of one of the respondents who said that the legislature had cynically given the people a placebo in the form of statewide minimum standards. It was simply the politically expedient thing to do at the time.

A leader in the New Jersey Education Association felt that the minimum standards law was a way of victimizing teachers for their success. Through their collective bargaining efforts, teachers had realized economic gains, which, in turn, had bred public resentment against teachers. The minimum

standards law was a way for the public, through its elected representatives, to vent this resentment. The NJEA leader claimed that this public vindictiveness had occurred in every country where teachers had begun to achieve wage parity with kindred workers.

Another respondent felt that the public generally was dissatisfied with a lot of things, but it had easier access to public institutions than to private ones, which in their corporate personhood still claimed the right to privacy, and the public institution to which the public had the greatest access was the educational system. Thus, demands for accountability from the institutions which serve the public were more likely to find a target in the public schools than elsewhere. Moreover, the school was an institution with whose operations a large portion of the public was acquainted and about which there was a personal interest.

Some of the factors cited to explain the passage of the minimum standards law were peculiar to New Jersey. Under a ruling by the State Supreme Court, the State Legislature had to devise a new public education law. The legislative enacted a new law but did not provide funding for the law. The State Supreme Court declared that the law could not be decreed constitutional in the absence of funding and threatened to close down the public schools of New Jersey unless the legislature came up with the money by a certain date. Eventually the Court was forced to act on its threat, and the state school system was shut down for a few days. Under the pressure, the legislature adopted an income tax with which to fund the new education law. The income tax meant that revenue would be generated in more affluent communities and distributed to poor communities. In this context, the statewide minimum standards law was viewed as a quid pro quo for the income tax. It was an attempt to assure the suburban taxpayer that his money would not be wasted on urban schools but would produce at least some minimal results.

The governor of New Jersey may have had some effect on the law's passage with his support, although his leadership in support of the income tax had reduced his popularity to the point of mockery. Members of his administrative team were resigning and publicly disassociating themselves from him.

One of the legislators who was most active on the Joint Education Committee of the State Legislature speculated that recent voter reapportionment in New Jersey might have given the cities the added political input necessary to effect passage of the minimum standards law.

Finally, urban and minority parents had enough confidence in their children's potential to believe that the children could reach and exceed the minimum standards and not be stigmatized as being hopelessly below those standards. They wanted a floor under their children's achievement, which the minimum standards law would lay.

In conclusion, it can be said that educational reform in New Jersey, as elsewhere, has been opposed by those on whom the brunt of the reform must fall - educators. The group that is being reformed - be it educators, doctors, lawyers, insurance salesmen - is the group which is most offended by and most resists reform. On the other hand, the admonition of "Physician, heal thyself" does not always produce the results the public wants or as quickly as the public wishes. The anomalous situation that arises is that the public ends up ordering reform, but the reform itself can only be effected by those found in need of reform. It is too much to expect the losing party to forego dilatoriness and vacillation and subversion in implementing that which it perceives to be inimical to its own interests.

In ordering the reform, the public is too prone to think of the wish as father to the act. The public may not be willing to stay with the issue through the implementation phase. The media may divert the public's attention to the next big news item, so that today's reform becomes not only old but passé - no longer an engaging topic of conversation at cocktail parties. In a short while, the past that was to be reformed reasserts itself. It may even do so with the fanfare of a counterreformation.

The public, whose attention span is short to begin with, may lose interest even more quickly when it begins to realize the intractability of the problem it had so blithely expected to legislate out of existence. This is especially true of educational reform, where good intentions are so difficult to

translate into effective practice. If the public does not get discouraged when confronted with the complexity of the issue, it may attempt to oversimplify the issue by seeking villains, i.e., educators. To face the facts forthrightly means an acknowledgement of one's own complicity in the educational failures of the society. It involves taking some responsibility for the non-school impediments which prevent the poor and oppressed from succeeding in school.

The Development of Statewide Pupil Proficiency Standards in New Jersey

Once a state legislature has decided that it would be a good idea to establish statewide minimum pupil proficiency standards, for whatever reasons, there remains the considerable, complex and consequential task of establishing those standards. Who should set them, how they should be set, who should do what to or for whom as a consequence, and what effect financial constraints have on educational decisions are issues which very few foresee when the new law is being conceived and the cause of much pain before the actual plan is born. This section will describe how minimum pupil proficiency standards were developed in New Jersey. It will focus on the powers used, the selection of participants, the determination of objectives and items, and finally, the development of the actual standards themselves.

The interim standards used in the statewide testing program conducted in October 1976, were essentially those recommended by the Department of Education appointed Task Force referred to earlier. This Task Force also had recommended that a new Task Force be created to develop a new statewide assessment instrument and standards to be used in future years. Whereas the previous New Jersey Education Assessment Program (NJEAP) was conducted every Fall, for grades 4, 7 and 9, and covered the entire range of topics generally taught throughout the state in reading and mathematics, the new test was to be given in the Spring, to grades 3, 6, 9 and 11, and be a Minimum Basic Skills test (MBS) of what students are expected at a minimum to have mastered by these grades.

The Department of Education decided to use essentially the same process used in the development of the NJEAP. Four subject committees were to determine the test objectives and review the test items. A Technical Advisory Committee, of nationwide testing experts, was to review the technical adequacy of all tests. A Minority Groups Advisory Council was to review tests for racial, ethnic and sex bias. A Bilingual Committee was to review issues of concern to students of limited English ability. A Communication

and Life Skills Committee was charged with determining the feasibility of expanding the scope of the test beyond reading to other communication skills, and to the broader life skills. A High School Graduation Requirements Committee was to consider the issue of minimum standards for graduation. The work of these seven committees was to be coordinated by an Advisory Committee consisting of the seven committee chairpersons and several others.

The members of the various committees were appointed by the Commissioner and State Board of Education. An attempt was made to balance each committee to insure a fair representation of views on the desirability of minimum standards, as well as according to race and sex, and to have at least one member from each of the following groups: superintendents, curriculum specialists, principals, teachers (2), board members, higher education, students, and the public, preferably from the business community. Many of those selected had been members of the NJEAP committees and the earlier Task Force. The Advisory Committee chairman, a business leader, had been chairman of the Task Force. Educational Testing Service (ETS), which had developed the NJEAP, was selected to develop the MBS test.

The selection process led to a higher proportion of males than females (58%-42%). (See Table 8.) There was a disproportionately high representation of minority and urban members. However, although the Department of Education claimed a 50-50 balance of public school educators to others, the presence of higher education representatives led to a 71-29 split of educators to non-educators, and many of the so-called non-educators had actually been in the field at one time. Of those who actually attended most of the meetings, 90% were educators. Therefore, although the predominance of educators does not suggest a monolithic view on any of the critical issues, the goal of the Commissioner and Board to have a broad based committee was not in fact met.

The Subject Committees started their task of selecting the specific skills to be tested (objectives) with three surveys. One was sent to 50,000 educators, all the State's teachers in grades 3, 6 and high school, and all the state's administrators and curriculum coordinators; 29,000 responded. A second survey to a sample of high school seniors and board members had

TABLE 8

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

	Elementary Reading (a)	Elementary Math (b)	Secondary Reading (c)	Secondary Math (d)	Total in Subject Area Committees	Communication & Life Skills (e)	Advisory Committee (f)	Total of 6 Committees (a,b,c,d, e, and f)*
Total Members	15	17	19	17	68	18	13	94
Male	6	10	10	11	37(54%)	12	7	55(58%)
Female	9	7	9	6	31(46%)	6	6	30(42%)
Minority Members	5	5	5	5	20(29%)	7	5	30(32%)
Educational Groups								
Teachers	4	2	3	3	12	1	-	13
Curriculum Coordinators	4	5	4	4	17	3	5	21
Principals	1	1	2	1	5	1	-	6
Superintendents	1	2	1	1	5	-	1	6
Total Public School Representation	10	10	10	9	39(57%)	5	6	46(49%)
Higher Education	3	2	4	4	13	6	3	21
Total # of Educators (%)	13	13	14	13	52(76%)	11	9	67(71%)
School Board Members	1	1	2	2	6	2	1	9
General Public	1	3	1	1	6	4	2	12
Students	-	2	1	1	4	1	1	6
Total Non-Education Public	2	6	4	4	16(24%)	6	4	27(29%)
Total Non-Public Schools	5	8	8	8	29(43%)	12	7	48(51%)
Urban Affiliation	5	8	5	5	23(33%)	8	5	34(36%)

The High School Graduation Committee was not included because this committee was originally established apart from the other committees, and its role was not directly related to the minimum basic skills program. Note also that the chairpersons of each committee served on the Advisory Committee, and the total in the last column is five less than the totals of the committee columns.

4,000 responses. The third was an Eagleton Institute telephone survey of 1,000 citizens.

The educators were asked to rank order a very detailed list of possible objectives, which included many which were used in the NJEAP, although some of the more "difficult" or advanced objectives were culled out, and others were expanded or added in accordance with the views of the subject committee members. The objectives included in the other two surveys were of a much more general nature. Although the subject committee members were not required to adhere to the results of any of the surveys, their final selections were in substantial agreement with those in the educator survey, even though they rejected some high ranked objectives and included some that were relatively low in rank. The other two surveys had very little impact on the final decisions because of their more general nature. Although it would be wrong to discuss the surveys as mere window dressing, because the committee members selected the objectives to be surveyed and made the final decisions regardless of survey results, the objectives which were ultimately included were essentially determined by the committee members, and not the state's educators, students, board members or public.

The major influence on the test items themselves was the staff of ETS which had been hired to develop them, although the Department of Education determined the total number of items to be included in each test, and committee members decided how many items to use to test each objective, and had the opportunity to discard items which they judged to be too difficult or easy, or appeared racist or sexist.

The MBS testwas field tested in October 1977, using a stratified random sample of 4,350 students from 196 of the state's 600 districts, in the four grades. The results were reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee which flagged certain items for review by the Subject Committees and the Minority Committee when:

a) the proportion of correct answers was below 60% or above 95%.
b) the corrleation of item scores to test scores was less than .30.

c) the delta value, or extent to which high scoring students chose an incorrect answer, fell within a specified range.
d) regression analysis of responses by black and white students.

Very few test items were changed as a result of the review by either the Subject or Minority Committees.

Although the Minority Committee was judged, in a survey of Subject Committee members, to have not played a major role in the entire test development process, the purpose for which they were created appears to have been achieved due to their own work, as well as the sensitivity of the Subject Committee members and the use of an in-house bias review procedure by ETS.

The Minority Committee did demonstrate its strength, however, by successfully challenging a proposed field test procedure which was perceived to have a negative impact on minority students. They also changed 46 items on the eight tests, which had been flagged after the field test on the basis of a regression analysis of responses for black and white students. Changes were made to eliminate bias in the language, but not in the difficulty level of the items.

In the survey of Subject Committee members, those members saw themselves as having had the greatest influence on the final selection of test items, with ETS staff next, and Department of Education and Minority Committee members least. (See Table 9.) The major role of the Department personnel seems to have been to keep the committee members on task in order to meet target dates, and to keep reminding them that the test was one of "minimum" basic skills.

Ultimately, the most important and most difficult decision of the entire process was the determination of the standards themselves. Based on political, historical, fiscal and educational factors, the Advisory Committee set the standards at 65% correct answers in mathematics and 75% in reading.

Although the Board of Education had the ultimate authority over the standards, there was an informal agreement between the Advisory Committee Chairman and

TABLE 9

INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS GROUPS[a] (BASED ON SURVEY OF SUBJECT AREA COMMITTEE: APPENDIX B, ITEM 2)

Influence of:	Extremely Influential	Moderately Influential	Slightly Influential	Not Influential	No Usable Response
17A. ETS personnel in test item development	15	11	8	3	1
B. ETS personnel in the proficiency standard decision	2	14	9	8	5
C. State Dept. personnel in test item development	2	9	14	11	2
D. State Dept. personnel in the proficiency standard decision	2	10	12	6	5
E. Minority Advisory Committee in the test item development	2	9	16	6	5
F. Minority Advisory Committee in the proficiency standard decision	2	10	9	7	10
18. Extent individual influenced by own subject matter committee	1	19	12	6	-
19A. Subject area committees on ultimate decision regarding test items	25	10	3	-	-
20B. Subject area committees on ultimate decision regarding proficiency standards	11	11	10	1	3

TOTAL RESPONSES = 38

NOTE: The SAC were not asked to judge the influence of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee because, with the exception of the committee chairperson, the members of the SAC had no direct contact with these other committees.

the Commissioner that the Task Force recommendation would be accepted unless it were far beyond his own best estimate. The members of the Advisory Committee generally considered their role, in this respect, to be dominant and their decision final.

Even though the passing score of 65% used in the previous year had been rather arbitrarily arrived at by the earlier Task Force, the fact that it already existed and was a traditional passing grade understood by the public, and that its use had generated a "reasonable" proportion of failures on the NJEAP, encouraged the continued use of that standard. "Reasonable," in this regard, was a political rather than a financial notion, the goal being to identify a percentage of failing students not so high as to make the state's educational system appear to be a total disaster, nor so low as to give the public the impression that the problem of basic skills deficiencies was being glossed over. In the interim year, the 65% passing grade had led to a statewide failure rate of about 20%, with some urban districts exceeding a 50% failure rate. The MBS field test indicated that the same results could be expected with a 65% standard on the MBS math tests.

The fiscal impact of the standard was also an issue that had to be considered and, although not frequently the subject of much discussion, was always present in people's minds. Raising the standards would increase the number requiring remediation and lead to a demand on the legislature for additional compensatory education funds, while a lower standard would result in districts losing funds and eliminating programs which had just begun.

Despite these historical, political and fiscal constraints, the Department and Advisory Committee were anxious to produce standards which were educationally sound and which represented the view of educational experts as to what children should know at a minimum in certain subjects and grades. This goal was sought through the use of the Nedelsky process,[1]

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[1]Method was first explained by L. Nedelsky in "Absolute Grading Standards for Objective Tests," Educational and Psychological Measurements, 1954, 14(1).

wherein each subject committee member reviewed each test item to estimate the probability of a correct response by a minimally competent student. The result was a wide variance of cut-off scores among the members of each committee and among the eight tests. (See Table 10.) For example, the range of cut-off scores for 11th grade reading was 80.7 to 95.7, compared to 30.0 to 38.8 for 9th grade math. The secondary math scores were so low that a revised Nedelsky process was utilized which led to higher scores.

Although the Subject Committee members reported in the survey that they considered "professional judgment" to be the major determinant of their recommendations, and considered the political or fiscal issues to be secondary or even suspect, they saw themselves as having far less impact on the setting of the standards than on the selection of the items. The wide range of scores resulting from the Nedelsky process tended to minimize the value of this objective educational impact and ultimately caused the final standards to be based largely on field test results and the recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee.

The Technical Committee gave very little importance to the Nedelsky results. They had field test results which showed what percentage would actually fall below any particular cut-off. Lacking objective educational impact, they were left with only the historical, political and fiscal factors as a basis for their recommendation. Some of the technical experts felt that standards should be based exclusively on what students should be able to do, not the state resources available; the funding question should be left to "the politicians and their consciences." Others were convinced that no decision could be made without "considering what was in the pot." They knew, from a Department of Education memorandum, that the current state compensatory aid formula would provide $300 per child for the bottom 28% of the total state enrollment. Their decision to recommend standards which would identify the lowest scoring 25% seems to have been largely determined by their knowledge of field test results and current state aid capability. The committee finally recommended cut-off of 65% in math and 75% in reading scores, which yielded failure rates of 25% and 20% respectively. Although one standard was preferred, two were deemed necessary

TABLE 10

DATA RELATED TO STANDARD SETTING

Tests	Cut-off scores based on Nedelsky estimates		Field Test Results Failure Rate if cut-off scores were set at different %							Failure Rate if Nedelsky average used as standard	Failure Rate on actual tests administered Apr. 78
	Average	Range	90	85	80	75	70	65	60		
Reading - 3	63.6	53.8-74.2	52.4	34.4	24.9	18.2*	13.1	10.0	7.1	9.6	13.7
Reading - 6	52.5	36.9-58.1	63.9	44.2	31.9	23.1*	17.5	11.2	6.8	4.2	24.7
Reading - 9	72.5	70.1-85.6	63.7	46.3	33.9	28.5*	22.4	18.9	14.0	25.6	23.7
Reading - 11	81.9	80.7-95.7	48.8	30.1	17.9	9.3*	5.7	4.4	2.1	20.2	10.1
Average for Reading Test			57.2	38.8	27.2	19.8	14.7	11.1	7.5		
Math - 3	58.2	46.7-66.6	76.1	60.2	46.9	37.8	29.6	22.9*	18.4	16.7	24.7
Math - 6	65.9	56.9-74.1	90.7	81.7	69.1	58.3	45.3	33.4*	25.2	35.9	29.6
Math - 9	37.2	30.0-38.8	77.6	65.1	54.9	44.6	34.9	25.9*	16.4	1.2	25.5
Math - 11	37.8	28.7-36.3	65.4	57.6	46.2	36.6	36.9	18.9*	12.3	0.7	16.0
Average for Math Tests			77.5	66.2	64.3	44.3	34.2	25.3	18.0		

*Rate of failure projected by field tests for standards that were finally approved (75% for Reading and 65% for Mathematics).

because of the significant difference in the difficulty level of the math and reading tests, and it was too late to modify the tests. A 75% cut-off in math would have resulted in a 44% failure rate, while a 65% cut-off in reading would have led to an 11% failure rate. The committee believed that the public was more likely to accept two standards than one which led to such results, or a floating standard pegged at a level to generate a predetermined percentage of the state's total enrollment for every grade and subject tested.

The Advisory Committee, which had the ultimate responsibility for setting the standards, accepted the recommendation of the Technical Committee, although they claimed to have come to this conclusion independently and for different reasons. This committee included the subject committee chairpersons who demanded that educational objectivity determine the standards. Its chairman frequently voiced the view that available state funding must not affect their decision; to do so would be a political disaster. It even had a statement of operating principles which included the view "that these instruments would be developed without being influenced by current state and local programs and/or capability to remediate student populations falling below minimum cut-off points." Therefore, although interviews with members revealed that the fiscal issue was always uppermost in their minds, committee discussions rarely dealt with this issue, and the final report claimed that the standards were based on objective, professional educational criteria, despite the relatively limited value of the Nedelsky process, the only objective, professional educational input.

Some Advisory Committee members preferred a floating standard which would result in the same failure rate in all tests, about 20%. This view was rejected for fear that the public would be confused by different cut-offs in each test. Having two standards, rather than eight, was a compromise which nevertheless led to a failure rate of only 9.3% in 11th grade reading, compared to 33.4% in 6th grade math.

The final recommendation of the Advisory Committee was accepted by the Department of Education and the State Board of Education. The process had worked and generally received high marks. Some aspects of that process are of particular interest. For example, time

was an important factor. Given half the time normally taken to develop such a test, and the use of volunteers meeting irregularly, it fell to the Department of Education to ride herd and ETS technicaisns to cut corners. Had there been more time, the difficulty level of all the tests could have been equalized to avoid the floating standard issue. A survey of Task Force members indicated that the decision-making process within all the committees was informal and open and operated in a consensus seeking mode. This was due to the lack of overt pressure by Department of Education officials and the fact that the Chairpeople encouraged a democratic process, while at the same time being skilled at coming to closure. Also, there was great similarity in the views of those who regularly attended their committee meetings.

One of the charges of the Communication and Life Skills Committee was obviated by the inclusion of life skills oriented test items by the Subject Committees. They did however recommend that the notion of communication be gradually expanded to include writing skills, and that the state start with an annual statewide assessment in related grades to begin in 1981. This proposal has not yet been acted on by the State Board of Education.

The Bilingual Committee, which was formed only after intense lobbying efforts, went far beyond its assigned responsibility. They submitted a 247 page report, which described a complete minimum competency program for bilingual students. They developed a set of MBS tests in Spanish as well as criteria for exit from bilingual programs.

The Committee on High School Graduation Requirements did not recommend a statewide test. Instead it recommended that the current minimal state course requirements (U.S. History, physical education and health) be expanded to include four years of English, two years of math and one year of natural science. They also developed a broad list of proficiencies which seniors should master to graduate, but based on local standards under state supervision.

More recently, since the completion of this study, the New Jersey legislature passed a law requiring statewide high school graduation requirements in math, reading and writing. After signature by the Governor, specific procedures for implementation remain to be developed by the Department of Education.

New Jersey experienced a wide range of political, fiscal and educational issues in the course of its development of statewide minimum pupil proficiencies. Although the Department of Education played a very unassuming role, it may have had a dominant influence by virtue of selecting the test development process and participants, by setting the time and test design constraints, by its constant, albeit quiet reminders that the tests were of "minimum" competence, by sharing information on available state resources, and by informally describing the range of what would ultimately be acceptable. The public and profession appear to be satisfied with their involvement, although their overt impact may have been negligible. The standards which were finally developed seem essentially to have been determined not by any objective educational judgment of what children should know, but rather by a pragmatic judgment of what would be a reasonable proportion of below minimal competency children which would be acceptable to the public and could be served by the resources the state legislature had already made available. If this is true, then not all of the time invested in the development of the tests seems necessary. A more honest, direct, simple, and less costly approach might be to frankly announce to the public the intent to remediate, let us say, the 29% or 25% lowest achieving students in the state, thus making the professional "formulation" of a standard prior to giving the test simply unnecessary.

By contrast with those states which have developed minimum standards for graduation and promotion requirements, New Jersey sought to identify those students below minimum competency in order to make sure they received remedial assistance designed to help them achieve at least minimal competency. The next section of this study will examine the impact which this program has had on the remedial resources available to the targeted children.

Fiscal and Programmatic Impact of the State Compensatory Education Programs on Selected Districts in New Jersey

Chapter 97 of the New Jersey Public Laws of 1976, which was signed into effect on September 22, 1976, mandated the use of uniform statewide minimum standards in the basic skill areas, and required districts in which there were pupils whose proficiency in these skills was below the statewide minimum standards to work towards achieving the statewide standards for these students. At its November 3, 1976 meeting, the New Jersey Board of Education adopted a comprehensive program to implement Chapter 97. In general, this program required that all children who fell below the statewide minimum standards should receive special assistance, and that such assistance would be financed through the compensatory education portion of the state aid plan. The general purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the state compensatory education program on those children found to be below the statewide minimum standards in communication and computation skills.

The districts chosen for this study represented a diverse sample of school districts in terms of expenditure and achievement levels. Using a 3 x 3 matrix relating the variables of high, medium and low expenditure per pupil with high, medium and low achievement, nine districts were chosen reflecting these characteristics. By examining budgets and other documents in each district which pertained to the compensatory education program and the regular school program, and through interviews with the district superintendents, administrators, principals and teachers, a comprehensive view of each of the nine districts was limned, revealing many disparities among the districts.

It was found in studying the compensatory education programs in the nine districts of varying per pupil expenditure and pupil achievement levels that, although the flow of State Compensatory Education aid was consistent with the needs of the districts, the final impact was such that the children enrolled in

the SCE programs in the high achieving districts received on an average three times as much per pupil in additional resources as the children in the low achieving districts. In the extreme case the children in the highest achieving district who were enrolled in SCE classes received an increase in compensatory resources more than 20 times as great as the children in the SCE program in the low achieving, low expenditure district. On the average, the high achieving districts increased their compensatory education programs by $127 per child while the medium achieving districts increased their programs by an average of $60 per child, and the low achieving districts by $42 per child. A more blatant discrepancy is found when one compares the expenditure increase of $155.04 per SCE pupil in the high achieving, high expenditure district with the increased expenditure of $7.19 per SCE pupil in the low achieving, low expenditure district. (See Table 11.)

Upon closer examination of the nine districts it was determined that the primary reason for this discrepancy in spending was due to the manner in which the districts chose to utilize their SCE funds. Whereas the high achieving districts chose to designate 90 to 100 percent of their SCE funds for the creation of new resources, the medium achieving districts as a group allocated only 50 percent of their SCE funds for new resources. The low achieving districts apportioned 55 to 58 percent respectively, in the high and medium expenditure districts, while the low achieving, low expenditure district contributed only 10 percent of its SCE funds toward providing new personnel resources. Moreover, this small apportionment was further reduced because this district had a larger proportion of children who required compensatory education in both computation and communication skills, while the SCE aid was based on a pupil count which included only one of these skill areas per child. As a result, the children who were receiving the least resources in the regular program, also received the least increase in compensatory education resources. Conversely, the children who were receiving the most resources in the regular program, received the most in additional compensatory education resources.

This inequality of spending for compensatory education can be attributed to the Public School Education Act itself, which does not require a

TABLE 11

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE DISTRICT COMPENSATORY EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF BUDGET PER PUPIL

Achievement			SCE Budget 1978-79 (1)	Portion of SCE Budget in Existence 1975-76 (2)	Portion of SCE Budget Applied to New Resources (3)	Local Compensatory Education Budget 1978-79 (4)	Portion of 1978 Budget Allocated to Local Compensatory Education Resources in Existence in 1975-76 (5)	Portion of Local Compensatory Education budget applied to New Resources (6)	Total new Compensatory Education Resources Per Pupil Enrollment in District (7)	Total new Compensatory Education Resources per student enrolled in SCE math or reading program (8)
	High	High Expend.	26.60	3.0	23.60	5.99	0	5.99	29.59	155.04
		Medium Expend.	18.99	0	18.99	9.91		9.91	28.90	157.97
		Low Expend.	18.70	0	18.70	60.47	60.47	0	18.70	67.68
	Medium	High Expend.	47.08	34.77	12.31	35.56	35.56	0	12.31	27.82
		Medium Expend.	70.25	52.94	17.31	39.46	31.10	8.36	25.67	37.28
		Low Expend.	31.87	0	31.87	59.38	59.38	0	31.87	115.23
	Low	High Expend.	104.05	46.72	57.33	0	0	0	57.33	54.87
		Medium Expend.	87.00	36.17	50.83	0	0	0	50.83	65.31
		Low Expend.	116.96	104.48	12.48	78.78	78.78	0	12.48	7.19

*An explanation of each of the columns is to be found on the following page.

Explanation of Table 11

Column (1) The 1978-79 State Compensatory Aid money utilized for salaries of teachers, supervisors of instruction and other instructional personnel divided by the number of enrolled students as of October 1, 1978.

Column (2) That portion of the 1978-79 State Compensatory Education budget which covered positions already in existence in 1975-76.

Column (3) That portion of the State Compensatory Education budget judged to constitute new personnel resources. This figure was obtained by subtracting column (2) from column (1).

Column (4) The local compensatory education budget in effect in 1978-79 utilized for salaries of teachers, supervisors of instruction and other instructional personnel, divided by pupil enrollment as of October 1, 1978.

Column (5) That portion of the 1978-79 local compensatory education program which covered positions already in existence in 1975-76.

Column (6) The portion of the local compensatory education program judged to constitute new personnel resources. This figure was obtained by subtracting column (5) from column (4).

Column (7) The total dollar value of new personnel resources from both state and local compensatory education funds. This figure was obtained by adding columns (3) and (6).

Column (8) The total dollar value in 1978-79 terms of new personnel resources per pupil actually enrolled in state approved compensatory education programs in both reading and mathematics in 1978-79. This figure was obtained by dividing the total dollar value of new personnel resources by the number of pupils enrolled in the State Compensatory Education Program in 1978-79.

particular expenditure per pupil for compensatory education nor that funds allocated to the districts for such programs be used to increase resources. Also, the utilization of state aid does not depend exclusively upon educational needs but may also be determined by fiscal considerations. Districts which have relatively low tax bases tend to have relatively high non-school tax rates. Urban districts, in particular, in New Jersey have relatively low tax bases and relatively high non-school tax rates. This fact, combined with a relatively low income level, tends to cause such districts to use their new state aid for tax relief rather than to augment the personnel resources of the Compensatory Education Programs.

The new law required that students who fell below the statewide standards of pupil proficiency in communication and computation skills, based on the Minimum Basic Skills Test in grades 3, 6, 9, and 11, be provided with appropriate compensatory education programs. For students in grades not administered the MBS test, the Department of Education recommended equivalent standards of pupil proficiency on national standardized tests which measured basic skills. Districts, however, were not limited to these state recommended standards in either the MBS or non-MBS grades, but could change them by evaluating students for admission or exclusion on the basis of higher district standards, teacher judgment, local tests, non-cognitive assessment techniques and parental or guardian requests. (See Table 12 for actual admission criteria.) However, although the districts could use a variety of criteria to select children for admission to the State Compensatory Education Programs, their state aid for compensatory education was limited by the State funding formula which was based upon the state test results and socioeconomic factors. Therefore, if the number of children enrolled in a district State Compensatory Education Program exceeded the State maximum enrollment figure, aid was limited to the maximum enrollment allowed, but if a district enrolled less than the maximum enrollment figure, the district would receive aid only for the actual pupil enrollment in the State Compensatory Education Program. In general, it was found that the districts studied exceeded the State recommended standards in the non-Minimum Basic Skill grades and thereby increased the number of students eligible for reimbursement by the State above that number which would have resulted had they used the State recommended standards alone. However, the

TABLE 12

ON WHAT BASES ARE STUDENTS ADMITTED TO THE STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM?

			State MBS Test and Standards	Standardized Tests			Local Tests and Local Standards*	Teacher Judgment of Cognitive Need	District Survey of Non-cognitive Needs	Parent Request
				Using State Rec. Standards	Using National Norms (Gr. Equiv.)*	Using District Norms Other Than Gr. Equiv.*				
ACHIEVEMENT	HIGH	High Expenditure	X	X				X		X
		Medium Expenditure	X			X				
		Low Expenditure	X			X				
	MEDIUM	High Expenditure	X	X				X		
		Medium Expenditure	X	X			X (math. only)			
		Low Expenditure	X	X				X		
	LOW	High Expenditure	X	X	X (Gr. 1-3)					
		Medium Expenditure	X	X		X (Gr. 1-5)		X	X	X
		Low Expenditure	X		X				X	

*These standards are all in excess of the State recommended standards.

administrators of the high achieving districts maintained that they were motivated by their intrinsic high academic standards whereas the administrators in the low achieving districts stated that their motivation was to maximize state aid.

The Public School Education Act did not specify the form or structure that compensatory education programs should take, but allowed the districts flexibility. Some districts reduced their class sizes or initiated team teaching methods in order to conduct individualized educational programs. Other districts offered pull-out programs. The choice of program was generally determined by the grade level of the students in need of compensatory services and the proportion of students requiring compensatory education. Budgetary concerns were also a factor in some districts.

Some of the salient aspects of the compensatory education programs were (1) whether they involved in-class or pull-out instruction, (2) whether they were in addition to the regular curriculum or in lieu of the regular class instruction, (3) the teacher/pupil ratio of the compensatory education classes.

There are pros and cons for both the pull-out and in-class types of compensatory instruction. In general, in deciding which method to employ, the districts considered grade level, proportion of students in need of assistance and budgetary constraints. (See Tables 13A and 13B for types of programs used.) Basically, the pull-out method was used at the elementary levels with six of the nine districts choosing to institute this type of program. At the middle grades only two districts opted for a pull-out program (both high achieving) since with this form of instruction students received additional assistance in the basic skill areas at the expense of other subjects. At the high school level compensatory education was mainly given in the form of forced electives.

In all grades, however, compensatory education could have been given in-class instead of additional instruction outside the classroom, and special organizational techniques were developed to accomplish this. This type of in-class compensatory education was more prevalent, however, at the middle grades with seven of the nine districts utilizing it in reading and six for math compensatory instruction.

TABLE 13A

TYPE OF PROGRAM: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

ACHIEVEMENT			EXPENDITURE								
			HIGH			MEDIUM			LOW		
			ELEM.	MIDDLE	H.S.	ELEM.	MIDDLE	H.S.	ELEM.	MIDDLE	H.S.
	HIGH	Program Type	P.O.	P.O.	S.C.	P.O.	I.C.	S.C.	P.O.	P.O.	S.C.
		Teacher/Pupil Ratio	1:4-5	1:6-7	1:4-10	1:4-10	1:8-14	1:14	1:4-5	1:4-5	1:16
		Minutes Per Week	150	220	220	150-300	225 9 weeks	225 9 weeks	90	90	90
	MEDIUM	Program Type	I.C.	I.C.	S.C.** I.C.	P.O.	I.C.	S.C.	I.C. P.O.***	I.C.	S.C.*
		Teacher/Pupil Ratio	1:12	1:16	1:16	1:8	1:23	1:23	1:18	1:18	1:20
		Minutes Per Week	300	300	132-220	225	225	88	250	225	225
	LOW	Program Type	P.O.	I.C.	S.C.	P.O.	I.C.	I.C.	I.C.	I.C.	I.C.
		Teacher/Pupil Ratio	1:10	1:16	1:15	1:8	1:8	1:22	1:26	1:14	1:26
		Minutes Per Week	60-140	220	220	90-225	225	Student Option	225	88-132	44-88

P.O. supplemental pull-out program in addition to regular basic skills curriculum in this area
I.C. in-class instruction at a lower level of difficulty in the regular classroom
S.C. supplementary regularly scheduled class in addition to the regular curriculum required in this district

* credit given towards graduation
** forced elective grades 9 and 10; regular curriculum in grades 11 and 12
*** pull-out program in certain schools

TABLE 13B

TYPE OF PROGRAM: COMPUTATION SKILLS

ACHIEVEMENT			EXPENDITURE								
			HIGH			MEDIUM			LOW		
			ELEM.	MIDDLE	H.S.	ELEM.	MIDDLE	H.S.	ELEM.	MIDDLE	H.S.
	HIGH	Program Type	P.O.	P.O.	S.C.	I.C.	I.C.	I.C.	P.O.	P.O.	S.C.
		Teacher/Pupil Ratio	1:4-5	1:6-7	1:4-10	1:15	1:15	1:14	1:4-5	1:4-5	1:16
		Minutes Per Week	150	220	220	150-300	225	225	90	90	90
	MEDIUM	Program Type	I.C.	S.C.	I.C.	I.C.	I.C.	S.C.	I.C.	I.C.	S.C.*
		Teacher/Pupil Ratio	1:12	1:16	1:16	1:23	1:23	1:12	1:18	1:18	1:20
		Minutes Per Week	300	132	220	225	225	225	250	225	225
	LOW	Program Type	P.O.	I.C.	S.C.	P.O.	I.C.	S.C.	I.C.	I.C.	I.C.
		Teacher/Pupil Ratio	1:10	1:16	1:15	1:8	1:8	1:22	1:26	1:14	1:26
		Minutes Per Week	60-140	220	220	90-225	225	225	225	225	88-132**

P.O. supplemental pull-out program in addition to regular basic skills curriculum in this area
I.C. in-class instruction at a lower level of difficulty in the regular classroom
S.C. supplementary regularly scheduled class in addition to the regular curriculum required in this district

* credit given towards graduation
** optional for students who have completed district requirements to math but do not choose to attend due to schedule conflicts

At the high school level, also, some districts provided in-class compensatory education in classes of a lower degree of difficulty instead of the regular curriculum offerings. This occurred, however, in only two districts (low achieving) in reading and in three districts (representing each level of achievement) in math compensatory instruction.

Because the low achieving, low expenditure district utilized 90 percent of its SCE funds to pay for programs that were previously in existence, it was unable to reduce its class sizes significantly in either the regular or compensatory education classes. In fact a percentage of its SCE budget paid for a proportion of the salaries of regular teachers who were presumed to be doing remedial work because identified SCE students were in their classes.

A prime determinant of the quality of a compensatory education program is the teacher/pupil ratio. Again, the high achieving districts were most advantaged since they were able to provide optimal conditions for student success by limiting their compensatory education classes in many cases to groups of from four to ten students and in some cases giving one to one instruction. This was not accomplished as successfully in the medium achieving districts whose classes ranged from 12 to 23 students, and the low achieving districts where classes ranged from 8 to 26 students in the compensatory education programs. An extreme comparison can again be made between the high achieving, high expenditure district and the low achieving, low expenditure district. In the former district class sizes ranged from 4 to 10 while in the latter district class sizes ranged from 14 to 26. The district which needed the most found itself with roughly three times as many students per teacher as the district which needed the least.

In general it can be said that whereas each of the nine districts attempted to maximize the benefits of the different types of programs at different grade levels, the high expenditure districts were able to provide resource-rich compensatory education programs that were in addition to an already resource-rich general program, whereas the low achieving districts, and especially the lowest, had resource-poor compensatory education programs compounded upon an already lower cost general program.

Since the perceptions of those whose job it is to operationalize the compensatory education programs are often as important in determining the direction and quality of the program as are the financial or programmatic aspects, the teachers and administrators of the nine districts were interviewed to determine their subjective evaluation of the success of the State Compensatory Education Program. Both positive and negative reactions were expressed. Among the administrators it was found that those in the low achieving districts felt hampered in their effectiveness by the State guidelines whereas those in the medium achieving districts expressed no such sentiment; the administrators in the high achieving districts were divided.

Approximately two-thirds of the principals and teachers interviewed, however, felt that the compensatory education program was either very or moderately successful in raising the level of achievement of students who fell below the minimum standards. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the program, the principal in a low achieving district succinctly summed up the State Compensatory Education Program as "more worth than bother." Possibly the most desirable outcome was that, in general, it was found that teachers and administrators had become more aware of the extent to which their programs met the needs of their students. Furthermore, most districts reported a positive effect on the attitude and achievement of students.

The results of the State Compensatory Education Program can be summarized as follows:

1. Although the State Compensatory Education funds represented only 5 percent of the total state aid budget and only 2 percent of the total state and local expenditures for educational programs, it did flow to the districts in accordance with their educational needs.

2. However, there was a tendency for the high achieving, high expenditure districts to put a larger proportion of SCE funds toward new programs while the low achieving, low expenditure districts tended to use a higher proportion for tax relief. As a result, for example, SCE students in the high achieving, high expenditure district received an additional $155 per pupil while SCE students in the low achieving, low expenditure district received an additional $7 per

pupil. This was in addition to the fact that the high achieving, high expenditure district was already spending 75 percent more on its regular program than its counterpart.

3. Nevertheless, a wide variety of new State Compensatory Education programs was developed which was judged by two-thirds of the teachers and principals to be moderately to very successful in raising the achievement level of students who fell below the minimum standards of proficiency.

4. A wide variety of side effects of the SCE Program was generated by the SCE Program, the most desirable effect of which was increased awareness of teachers and principals of students' individual needs and an improved educational environment for all students.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROPOCOLS

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE OF INTERVIEWS

PURPOSE

To interview the major figures who have been involved in this issue, in order to understand how and why New Jersey arrived at the present legislation regarding statewide minimum standards.

PROCEDURE

(1) "Consent for Interview" form.

Prior to the interview you will be mailed a "Consent for Interview" form, a Rutgers University requirement resulting from the national concern for privacy and designed to protect unwitting subjects on sensitive issues. It will enable you to give your written permission for the interview and will apprise you of the protections afforded your interview responses. For your convenience, the form will be picked up by the interviewer at the interview, so that you will not have to mail it back.

(2) Time required.

The interview should take approximately thirty minutes to one hour.

(3) Recording procedure.

The interview will be recorded by hand, since the project budget does not allow for tape recording.

(4) Questions.

The questions on the enclosed list will be discussed with each of the interviewees.

CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

I, the undersigned, consent to be interviewed as part of the study of statewide minimum standards being conducted at Rutgers University under a grant from the National Institute of Education. The questions will be concerned with the process and reasons by which the law on minimum standards was advocated or opposed.

I understand that my signature on this document simply consents to the interview, and that unless I give a separate consent in writing I will not be named in the research report nor described in any way which would reveal my identity. My interview results will be kept secure from the attention of anyone but the research team itself unless I give this separate consent in writing.

I further understand that I may withdraw my consents at any time I wish before they have been acted upon.

_____
(signature)

_____
(date)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Statewide minimum standards has been an issue in New Jersey for more than a year. Would you classify yourself as a consistent advocate or opponent of minimum standards or have your views changed during this period?
2. By what groups or individuals were you advised in the formulation of your opinion on this issue?
3. If your views changed during this period which groups or individuals were most influential in changing your views? How and why?
4. What steps did you or your organization take to facilitate (prevent) the passage of the minimum standards law?
5. What groups or individuals were most effective in assisting you in your efforts?
6. What did each of them do?
7. What factors or forces do you think account for the passage of the law?
8. To what extent does the law meet your goals (or concerns) regarding minimum standards?
9. How do you feel about the way the law is being implemented?

10. What kinds of problems do you foresee in the future, regarding the implementation of the new law, from the point of view of children, parents, teachers, administrators, taxpayers, State Education Department officials or legislators?
11. If it is found that a considerable proportion of New Jersey students are below the minimum standards, and quite far below, what action do you think this would call for?
12. What is your opinion of having statewide minimum requirements for high school graduation?
13. (Where appropriate) May we arrange to get copies of your organization's literature on statewide minimum competencies?

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

RUTGERS
THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY

N.I.E. Grant
Graduate School of Education
Rutgers University
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

June 17, 1978

Dear

As a member of the New Jersey Department of Education Basic Skills Committee, which designed the New Jersey Minimum Basic Skills Test, your cooperation is crucial to a study that we are conducting.

The National Institute of Education is financing a study of New Jersey's minimum basic skills program. The study is being carried out jointly by the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education and the New Jersey Education Reform Project.

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to help us answer questions related to the role that your specific Committee played in the development of the State Minimum Basic Skills Test and standards. Your time in completing this questionnaire carefully and promptly will be of great assistance to us in arriving at accurate findings and sound conclusions.

Please be assured that your answers will be held in strictest confidence. No individual responses to the questionnaire will be reported in any way that will identify the respondent.

We thank you in advance for your help and extend our appreciation for the work you have already done with the State testing program.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ken Carlson
Larry Rubin
Joyce Lord
Robert Noonan
Mary Elizabeth Connors

(N.I.E. Project Staff)

ITEM 66

QUESTIONNAIRE (Subject Matter Committee Members)

NAME _____

1. What is your current job title? _____
2. On what Subject Matter Committee did you serve? _____
3. Do you know why you were requested to participate on this committee?
   (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
4. If answer to question 3 was "Yes", please give reason.

5. Have you ever been a classroom teacher? (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
6. If answer to question 5 was "Yes", please list years of teaching experience.

   Years
   ( ) a. Elementary
   ( ) b. Secondary
   ( ) c. Higher Education

7. If answer to question 5 was "Yes", have you ever taught minimally competent students?
   (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
8. If you are an educator, what is the district in which you are currently employed?
   _____
9. If you are not an educator, indicate the name of the school district in which you reside
   _____
10. To what extent did the committee members have the opportunity to talk during committee meetings?
   ( ) a. Never
   ( ) b. Seldom
   ( ) c. Frequently
   ( ) d. As often as they considered necessary
11. To what extent were the committee members getting the meaning of one another's statements?
   ( ) a. They were "talking past" one another; there was much misunderstanding.
   ( ) b. They communicated directly with one another.
12. Did your committee tend to
   ( ) a. break into three or more small groups during discussions?
   ( ) b. break into two sides during the discussions?
   ( ) c. carry on the discussion as a single group?
13. Do you believe your opinion
   ( ) a. was important in reaching a group decision?
   ( ) b. helped some in bringing the group to a decision?
   ( ) c. didn't have any effect upon the group?

14. During discussions, did
    ( ) a. a few people speak, each representing the ideas of several others?
    ( ) b. a few people speak, representing only themselves?
    ( ) c. just about everyone gave his/her own idea?

15. How formal were the interrelationships among committee members?
    ( ) a. Extremely formal
    ( ) b. Predominantly formal
    ( ) c. Largely informal
    ( ) d. Completely informal

16. List in priority order the most influential members of your committee in:
    (a) developing the test items

    (b) deciding the proficiency standard

17. Resource and advisory personnel, such as ETS specialists, state department research personnel, and members of the Minority Advisory Council were present at committee meetings for information and clarification purposes. How influential were the members of each of these representative groups in the final consensus decisions of your committee concerning the following:

    A. ETS personnel in test item development?
       ( ) a. Extremely influential
       ( ) b. Moderately influential
       ( ) c. Slightly influential
       ( ) d. Not influential

    B. ETS personnel in the proficiency standard decision?
       ( ) a. Extremely influential
       ( ) b. Moderately influential
       ( ) c. Slightly influential
       ( ) d. Not influential

    C. State department research personnel in test item development?
       ( ) a. Extremely influential
       ( ) b. Moderately influential
       ( ) c. Slightly influential
       ( ) d. Not influential

    D. State department research personnel in the proficiency standard development?
       ( ) a. Extremely influential
       ( ) b. Moderately influential
       ( ) c. Slightly influential
       ( ) d. Not influential

    E. Minority Advisory Council members in test item development?
       ( ) a. Extremely influential
       ( ) b. Moderately influential
       ( ) c. Slightly influential
       ( ) d. Not influential

    F. Minority Advisory Council members in the proficiency standard development?
       ( ) a. Extremely influential
       ( ) b. Moderately influential
       ( ) c. Slightly influential
       ( ) d. Not influential

18. To what extent were you influenced by the views and opinions of other subject matter committee members?
    ( ) a. Extremely influenced
    ( ) b. Moderately influenced
    ( ) c. Slightly influenced
    ( ) d. Not influenced

19. In your opinion, to what degree did your committee determine the ultimate decision regarding:

    A. Selecting test items?
    ( ) a. Extremely influential
    ( ) b. Moderately influential
    ( ) c. Slightly influential
    ( ) d. Not influential

    B. Proficiency standards?
    ( ) a. Extremely influential
    ( ) b. Moderately influential
    ( ) c. Slighlty influential
    ( ) d. Not influential

20. List in priority order the persons (and/or organizations), other than members of your committee, who were most influential during the development of the recommendations of your committee. Briefly explain how and why.

21. Please rank order (1= most important) the following statements to reflect your beliefs regarding how a state minimum standard should be developed.

    Standards should be based on:

    ____ a. available state resources for remediation

    ____ b. whether the percentage of students below the standard falls within a range acceptable to the public

    ____ c. professional judgment regarding what children should know

    ____ d. Other. Please describe. _____

    _____

22. Please rank order (1= most important) the following statements to reflect your judgment of your committee's views regarding how a state minimum standard should be developed.

    Standards should be based on:

    ____ a. available state resources for remediation

    ____ b. whether the percentage of students below the standard falls within a range acceptable to the public

    ____ c. professional judgment regarding what children should know

    ____ d. Other. Please describe. _____

    _____

ITEM 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(Chairpersons of Subject Matter Committees, Technical Advisory and Minority Groups Advisory Councils)

1. Why were you selected as chairperson of your committee?

2. Did you participate in the selection of committee members?

3. What did you observe as the greatest concern(s) of your committee in the test development?

4. What did you observe as the greatest concern(s) of your committee in determining the proficiency standards?

5. What was the degree of committee member consensus during the development of the tests and standards?

6. List in priority order the most influential member of your committee in:

   (a) developing the test item. Why?
   (b) deciding the test standards. Why?

* 7. Resource and advisory personnel, such as ETS specialists, state department research personnel, and members of the Minority Advisory Council were present at committee meetings for information and clarification purposes. How influential were the members of each of these representative groups in the final consensus decisions of your committee regarding:

   (a) the test items? Why?
   (b) the proficiency standards?

8. To what degree did your committee consider itself invested with the ultimate decision of:

   (a) the test development?
   (b) the proficiency standard?

9. What do you think about the changes, if any, made to your committee's recommendations?

** 10. Please describe the methodology used by your committee in developing the tests and standards.

11. Which key bureaucratic officials were most supportive during the development of the tests and proficiency standards? How and why?

12. Was there much formal and informal communication with these officials during the test and standards process?

* For Subject Matter Committee Chairpersons only.

** For Technical Advisory and Minority Council Chairpersons only.

ITEM 4

Interview Questions
(key bureaucratic officials)

1. The Minimum Basic Skills Tests and Proficiency Standards were approved by the State Board of Education in March and implemented for the first time in April. Would you classify yourself as an advocate or opponent of the tests and standards that have been developed?

2. Have your views changed from your original position from the time the Minimum Standards was approved in 1976? How and why?

3. How do you feel about the way the tests and standards were developed?

4. Why was this particular decision-making route of test design and standard development chosen rather than any other?

5. How and why were various committee members including committee chairpersons selected for the committees?

6. Did you have any formal and informal communication with the committees charged with the test design and standard development during the process? Why? How? How often? With whom?

7. What were your major concern regarding the test design and cut-off scores?

8. How much influence do you think you had on the final decision?

9. How do you feel about changes made to committee recommendations?

10. Whom do you believe to be the "influentials" in the various committees?